

CASE STUDY:



Knowledge Sharing Helps Companies Become Successful

The Siemens-Betriebskrankenkasse (SBK) ranks highly among the top German health insurance companies in terms of customer service. It received the 2016 Deutscher Servicepreis Award for excellent customer service and was named one of the leading competitors in the 2015 Kundenmonitor Deutschland benchmarking study on outstanding customer service. For many years, employees have rated SBK among Germany's best employers. All 1,800 of SBK's employees have full access to getAbstract's multimedia business library. The use of getAbstract fosters a culture of learning and knowledge sharing among employees and provides a source of new ideas.



Blended Learning

SBK's training programs include seminars on acquiring methodical, leadership, communication and sales skills, as well as classes for trainees and dual education students. External instructors work closely with SBK's human resources team to devise learning sessions, integrating getAbstract's clear and concise summaries into preparatory assignments, seminar classes and follow-up work.

According to SBK's chief human resources development officer, Jerobeam Rückert, "Summaries discussing the specific topics that a seminar addresses provide great preparatory reading material for students. Often, these summaries also tackle a subject on a meta level, or they talk about opposing views." Reading getAbstract's

summaries arouses participants' curiosity about a certain topic even before the training starts.

getAbstract: A Means of Knowledge Transfer

Gauging training programs' effectiveness currently poses a challenge to SBK's HR training and development department. The seminars impart a lot of information to the participants. Yet how can SBK ensure that their employees will put the acquired knowledge into practice when they're back at their desks at one of the more than 100 offices situated all across Germany?

Rückert considers getAbstract to be the perfect solution to support this knowledge transfer process. The reading lists that participants receive via email after a seminar include summaries of books that

instructors recommend, as well as further topic-related reading material. Most participants do not have the time to read an entire book, but many have enough time for a summary that takes only 10 minutes to read. And with the free getAbstract app, users can access the summaries anytime and anywhere.

Every three months, participants hold "peer group" discussions in virtual meetings where they share stories about how they apply the knowledge they acquired during training sessions to their everyday work. getAbstract summaries – which instructors choose and send via email to the participants – serve as the basis for those discussions.

Rückert stresses how important it was to integrate getAbstract summaries into SBK's

Achieved Results

- getAbstract helps employees apply the knowledge they acquire in training seminars.
- getAbstract serves as a source of inspiration for innovation in all business fields.
- getAbstract enables all employees to embrace the company culture.
- User comment: "Whenever I need help, I try to find it in one of getAbstract's summaries. I've used summaries to prepare for workshops or to do some follow-up reading after a training session. Summaries also served as a source of inspiration for team talks on topics such as service and personal advice."

workshops. “It’s the key to bringing getAbstract’s diverse offerings closer to our employees.” Integrating the summaries also helped SBK reach another goal: to create a culture of sharing.

getAbstract: A Source of Inspiration and Innovation

SBK employees now recommend summaries to one another across all hierarchy levels – top-down and vice versa. For example, the head of a department knew about a challenge one of her team members was facing. She read a summary on that topic and then shared it with her colleague to help him overcome the challenge. On another occasion, reading a getAbstract summary inspired an employee to approach one of his tasks differently. He shared his ideas and new way of handling tasks with his team leader.

When choosing which abstracts to read, many SBK employees turn to the ratings. Summaries of books with a high innovation rating, for example, offer important and positive incentives for strategic development and serve as a source of inspiration at SBK. For example, for quite a while, SBK’s HR team had been trying to optimize their training programs’ efficiency. They browsed through the getAbstract library on the SBK company portal and found a summary on that topic. Inspired by what the summary said, the HR team developed the idea of “microtraining sessions.” The team members did some further reading, got the organizational development steering committee involved and introduced a concept to implement the new approach. Rückert acknowledges that not all

innovations will come out of reading one summary, as was the case with the microtraining sessions. But he does notice more and more how all employees – not just those on the HR team – get inspired by getAbstract’s summaries.

Applied Working and Learning Culture

SBK uses getAbstract companywide mainly to foster its corporate culture. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that employees rate SBK as one of the best employers in Germany. The company’s family-friendly policies, for example, support this appraisal: 70% of SBK’s employees are women, and 40% of the company’s leaders are women – a rather high percentage compared with other organizations. SBK also offers part-time work, which is becoming increasingly popular among working dads.

Email initiatives set up by getAbstract provide extensive reading material on such topics as “Juggling Family and Career” and “Part-Time Work Among Men.” SBK’s board members also use getAbstract to inject energy at the senior management level. Board members pick summaries on management topics and forward them to the executive team.

According to SBK’s head of HR, Karola Wellenbrock, “getAbstract is a tool that tremendously and positively influences our company’s learning culture, as well as the entire working culture. What I like most about getAbstract’s solution is that all our employees have access to the summary libraries, enabling them to fully embrace a culture of sharing across all levels.”



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– Karola Wellenbrock, Head of Human Resources at Siemens-Betriebskrankenkasse